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SUBJECT: "AMMAN MESSAGE" INTERFAITH IFTAR PROMOTES
COEXISTENCE AND UNDERSTANDING

REF: 04 AMMAN 9152

1. Summary. The Jordanian Interfaith Coexistence Research Center (JICRC) hosted an interfaith conference on October 31 in Amman. With post financial help, the conference brought together representatives of Islam, Christianity, and Judaism from the U.S. and the Middle East to discuss moderation in religion - the theme of King Abdullah's "Amman Message" - which was launched one year earlier. Following three panel discussions, the event concluded with an Iftar and final statement. End Summary.

2. Just over one year ago, on November 9, 2004 during Ramadan, King Abdullah announced the "Amman Message" (reftel), a declaration issued by Jordan's leading Muslim cleric, and Advisor to the Royal Court Sheikh Izzedine Tamimi, that called on all Muslims to embrace moderation and tolerance, and to denounce extremism and terrorism. To mark the first anniversary of the Amman Message, the JICRC sought to expand its endorsement of non-violence and moderation to all three principal monotheistic faiths. To achieve this goal, the JICRC organized a conference - partially funded through post's Public Affairs PASA funds - entitled "The Amman Message in Action" that brought together Christian, Muslim, and Jewish leaders from the U.S., Jordan, Israel, Syria, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia to discuss the concepts of coexistence and tolerance as they apply universally to all faiths, and singularly to each.

3. The conference consisted of panel-led discussions on the following subjects: Perspectives of the Amman Message from the Muslim World; Interfaith Interpretations of the Amman Message; and The Amman Message - A Global Call for Coexistence. Following the final panel of speakers, JICRC executive director and conference host Father Nabil Haddad - head of the Melkite Church in Jordan - presented the conference's final statement, an interfaith endorsement of the Amman Message. NOTE: The complete text of the final statement is contained in paragraph 5 below. END NOTE. At the conclusion of this presentation, the conference participants and guests shared an Iftar banquet to break that day's Ramadan fasting.

4. Reactions to the panelists and to the discussions that followed were generally positive. While much work lies ahead on the road toward full acceptance of differing views and perspectives, the conference succeeded in bringing together scholars and clerics who otherwise would not have had the chance to meet and discuss the shared values of their respective faiths. At the presentation of the conference statement, one panelist remarked, and several in the audience echoed, that action must follow the conference to achieve its message.

5. Following is the complete text of the conference statement, titled the "Amman Message Interfaith Declaration":

We, participants from the three monotheistic faiths, have met in Amman in the Holy Month of Ramadan of the year 2005 in order to commemorate and reiterate the principles embodied in the Amman Message in the year 2004, under the auspices and support of His Majesty King Abdullah II, who has also so kindly honored all of us by patronizing our auspicious gathering.

The Amman Message, as all of us gathered in this international, interfaith conference have made clear, epitomizes, embraces, and asserts the fundamental and noble principles of all faiths. The Amman Message is a message of coexistence, diversity, and peace. It privileges tolerance, cooperation, and understanding at the local, regional, and global levels.

The significance of the Amman Message, which seeks to restate and underscore the fundamentals of the message of Islam itself, stems essentially from two dimensions. First, it underlines the everlasting truth, relevance and role of Islam as a religion of moderation and peace, and as a religion which rejects and condemns all acts of chauvinism, bigotry, extremism, violence, terror, injustice, and terrorism.

Secondly, the Amman Message stresses the universality of the Islamic message as well as its affinities with and

confirmation of the messages of Judaism and Christianity, religions of the People of the Book, that are united with the Muslim world community in their affirmation, recognition, and respect of dialogue, common understanding, the right to life, liberty, prosperity, and peace to all inhabitants of this small globe. The three monotheistic religions recognize differences as healthy, capitalize on similarities, and emphasize and uphold righteousness

Furthermore, they all espouse the notion of a faith founded on knowledge and denounce ignorance or misinterpretation of faiths for narcissistic, solipsistic, and extremist purposes. Inspired by the values of our religions, and of the Amman Message, we pledge our support of the principles of the Amman Message, and to reciprocate its principles and vow to work actively together for the sake of mutual, interfaith and global understanding, respect, and peace.

The Amman Message is the Message of all of us. END TEXT.
HALE